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The following are excerpts from the address of Roy E. Norris, Industrial Sec'y.
Urban League of Newark

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THE NEGRO WORKER IN THE WHITE COLLAR FIELDS

The efforts of hundreds of stalwart Americans to erase the blot of discrimination against members of minority groups from the conscience of decent America, have fallen far short of the white collar areas. Negroes are kept out of the millstream of white collar employment in patterns that are a challenge to the most intelligent leadership that America can muster. These fields of employment represent the new 1946 line of demarcation between the rubble of racial prejudices torn down during the war, and the serene, supercilious, and stubborn prejudices still being brutishly clung to by many Americans.

We have just witnessed one of the most remarkable advances along the lines of employment that can be recounted by any group of people in America. At no time before in the history of the United States has any racial, cultural, or ethnic group moved into occupations previously foreign to it in such large numbers, and functioned so well in those new occupations, as the Negro group has done during World War II.

Let's make a comparison. We note that in 1940, more than 70 per cent of employed Negro women were engaged in service occupations; however, only 22.4 per cent of employed white women were engaged in the same occupations. Moreover, among clerical and sales workers were found almost one third of employed white women, but only about one per cent of employed Negro women.

Negroes are now employed as clerical workers in the home offices of two of the largest insurance companies in the United States.

By March of 1944, Negroes employed by the federal government in Washington had become 19.2 per cent of the total departmental agency employment rolls. Instead of 90 per cent as in 1939, 40 per cent were classified in crafts, protective, and custodial work, and 60 per cent were in clerical, administrative and fiscal, clerical mechanic, professional, and sub-professional positions. Our federal government has provided the most decided improvement in the whole white collar field of employment for Negroes.

Negroes have had jobs, numbers of jobs, and they performed their tasks satisfactorily. Negroes should be no longer without freedom of choice in job fields. The war for fair employment is not won. Our new battle line is in the white collar fields. Negroes must break through the white collar bottleneck, so that Negroes in America can give constructive expression to all of their best talents and abilities.